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The Old Russian Version of the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Secreta Secretorum*

W. F. RYAN

THE *Secreta Secretorum* is a work which purports to be the advice of Aristotle to Alexander the Great on a wide variety of subjects useful to a ruler and ranging from personal hygiene to the problem of selecting secretaries and a method of predicting the outcome of battles. The work was very popular in Europe and in the Islamic world and is found in many forms, often adapted for local or polemical purposes, in most of the languages of Europe, including Russian. In fact the original work is probably a composite of other works or fragments and is in all probability of ninth or tenth-century Arabic origin. Editions have been published of the Arabic, Hebrew, Latin, and several vernacular versions. Unfortunately, despite all this our knowledge of the text is still very incomplete. Although as far back as 1889 Foerster published a list of over two hundred copies of the complete Latin version,¹ and many more are now known, there is still no overall study of this form of the text. Steele, in his *Opera hactenus inedita Rogeri Baconi*, was obliged to devote a whole volume to Roger Bacon's text alone, and with all its imperfections this is still an essential study of the Latin text and its vernacular derivatives.² With regard to the Arabic texts and their derivatives it has recently been supplemented and superseded in many respects by two important monographs devoted to the origin and tradition of the *Secreta* in its Arabic version. The first, by Mahmoud Manzalaoui, 'The Pseudo-Aristotelian *Kitāb Sirr al-asrār*: Facts and Problems'³

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¹ R. Foerster, *De Aristotelis quae feruntur Secretis Secretorum*, Kiel, 1888. A more recent and fuller list is to be found in F. Wurms, *Studien zu den deutschen und lateinischen Prosafassungen des pseudoaristotelischen 'Secretum secretorum'* (Ph.D. dissertation, Hamburg, 1970. Published).

² R. Steele, *Secreta Secretorum cum glossis et notulis* . . . (*Opera hactenus inedita Rogeri Baconi*, fasc. 5), Oxford, 1920. This also contains an English translation of the Arabic version which has been used here for comparative purposes. A more recent re-edition of the Latin version is to be found in R. Möller, *Hilgart von Hürnheim: Mittelhochdeutsche Prosafassung des Secretum Secretorum*, Berlin, 1963.

³ M. Manzalaoui, 'The Pseudo-Aristotelian *Kitāb Sirr al-asrār*: Facts and Problems' (*Oriens*, vol. 23-24, Leiden, 1970-71 (published 1975)). I have also to thank Professor Manzalaoui for help and advice on the *Secreta* over many years.

is by far the fullest statement so far on the origins, structure, derivations, ramifications, filiation, locations of manuscripts and bibliography of the *Secreta*. The second recent work, by M. Grignaschi⁴ is a densely argued study of the origins and tradition of the Arabic version, differing somewhat from Manzalaoui in points of interpretation, and, more importantly here, according the Russian version considerable importance as evidence for the overall history of the work. His conclusion that the nature of the Russian text points to a version of the Arabic *Secreta* not hitherto recorded, although speculative, is very interesting and to some extent supported by evidence presented in this paper. It has encouraged me to offer this more detailed description of the structure of the Russian text.

In this paper I have no intention of adding to speculation about the origin or tradition of the *Secreta Secretorum*, nor am I competent to do so. I wish only to establish in outline the structure and content of the Russian version *vis-à-vis* other versions and to draw attention to the historical context of its appearance in the hope that this will be of use to other students of the work. I cannot here give details of manuscript variants of the Russian version or examine the finer details of translation of what is a comparatively large work. For the purposes of this paper I shall make use of Manzalaoui's analysis of the structure of the versions of the *Secreta* and the English translations of the Arabic and Hebrew versions published by Steele⁵ and Gaster.⁶

I

Steele in his discussion of the two basic forms of the *Secreta* designates them the Eastern (containing seven or eight discourses) and the Western (containing ten discourses). As these are rather arbitrary descriptions I prefer to follow Manzalaoui in referring to the Short (probably earlier) Form and the Long Form. All the West European versions, with the exception of the Castilian, appear to derive from the Latin translation by Philippus Tripolitanus of the Arabic Long Form, made probably in the early thirteenth century. The Russian version, however, is peculiar among the vernacular versions in that it derives from a Short Form Hebrew version similar

⁴ M. Grignaschi, 'L'Origine et les métamorphoses du *Sirr al-asrār*' (*Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge*, vol. XLIII, Paris, 1977, pp. 7-12). Although some of the information about the Russian *Secreta* in this monograph was obtained from me, the observations and conclusions made by Professor Grignaschi are entirely his own.

⁵ Steele, *op. cit.*, pp. 176-266.

⁶ M. Gaster, 'The Hebrew Version of the *Secretum Secretorum*' (*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, London, October 1907, pp. 879-912; January and October 1908, pp. 111-62, 1065-84).

to that published by Gaster and appears to be the only offspring of the Hebrew version.

The first scholarly description of the Russian version, the *Taynaya taynykh*, was by A. I. Sobolevsky in his work on the translated literature of Muscovite Russia.⁷ He and most Russian scholars following him ascribe the translation to the religious sect known in the literature as the Judaizers. This speculation, now well established by repetition, was based on the apparently Hebrew origin of the text and an apparent chronological appropriateness. It has been challenged in more recent times by Professor Ya. S. Lur'ye, who speaks of 'humanist circles in South-West Russia' (i.e. Byelorussia and the Ukraine) as a possible source.⁸ However, this is merely to exchange one vague ascription for another, and the linguistic evidence (philosophical and scientific terminology, one or two Hebrew words, and the treatment of certain names) certainly does link the translation *prima facie* with the Russian translations of fragments of Algazali and Maimonides (the so-called *Logika*), the *Six Wings* of Emmanuel Bonfils of Tarascon (*Shestokryl* in Russian),⁹ and a translation of the Hebrew version of Sacrobosco's *De Spera*, all of which are associated with the Judaizers on rather firmer evidence — they are mentioned as being books belonging to the Judaizers in a letter by Archbishop Gennady of Novgorod in 1489.¹⁰ One might also point to certain similarities of terminology and sentiment with the *Laodikiyskoye poslaniye* of Fyodor Kuritsyn.¹¹ At the same time it must be said that none of the complete copies of the *Taynaya taynykh* is datable to the late fifteenth century,¹² the crucial period for the Muscovite and Novgorodian Judaizers, although the sect, if sect it was properly speaking, was certainly not dead in the sixteenth century, at least in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania where measures were taken against it.¹³ It is also worth noting that the date of the appearance of this sect in Russia, and some of the texts associated with it, corresponds with the date of the persecution and final expulsion of the Jews from Spain in

⁷ A. I. Sobolevsky, 'Perevodnaya literatura Moskovskoy Rusi XIV–XVII vekov' in *Sbornik Otdeleniya russkogo yazyka i slovesnosti*, vol. 74, St Petersburg, 1903, pp. 419–23.

⁸ Ya. S. Lur'ye, *Ideologicheskaya bor'ba v russkoy publitsistike kontsa XV — nachala XVI veka*, Moscow–Leningrad, 1960, pp. 194–95.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 144–45.

¹⁰ N. A. Kazakova, Ya. S. Lur'ye, *Antifeodal'nyye yereticheskiye dvizheniya na Rusi XIV — nachala XVI veka*, Moscow–Leningrad, 1955, p. 320.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 256–76. On the word *farisei*, but without reference to the *Taynaya taynykh*, see J. Luria [Lur'ye], 'L'Herésie dite des judaisants et les sources historiques' (*Revue des études slaves*, vol. 45, Paris, 1966, p. 51).

¹² However, what appears to be a quotation from the *Taynaya taynykh* (in Great Russian moreover) is found in a manuscript of the end of the fifteenth or beginning of the sixteenth century (see A. I. Klibanov, *Reformatsionnyye dvizheniya v Rossii*, Moscow, 1960, p. 348). This is the earliest positive evidence of the existence of the work in Muscovy.

¹³ See *Akty, otnosyashchiesya k istorii Zapadnoy Rossii*, St Petersburg, 1848, vol. 2, pp. 350–51 (*gramota* of 1539).

1492 and the foundation of new Sephardic communities in South-Eastern and Central Europe, and that most of the so-called Judaizer translations are of works of Sephardic origin.

In 1908 a connoisseur of the obscurer Russian texts, M. N. Speransky, produced an edition of the Russian *Secreta*.¹⁴ Unfortunately he did not make use of all the available Russian manuscripts but simply printed the oldest he could find with some variant readings from three other manuscripts. His *apparatus criticus* was not elaborate and his lengthy introduction and appendices were often irrelevant, being largely concerned with the Latin and Czech versions and the medical interpolations. The text used by Speransky (MS Vil. 222) was incomplete, difficult to read and often corrupt, and further suffered from what seems to have been hasty reading and editing on Speransky's part. As a result the published text is often incomprehensible and seems to have been little studied, even by those who occasionally refer to it. Speransky did not read Hebrew but did take the trouble to get a correspondent to compare the chapter headings of the Russian text with those of Arabic, Hebrew and Latin texts, from which comparison he was able at least to conclude that the Russian version followed the Hebrew. None of the brief articles which have since appeared in Russian has done more than provide variant readings and argue about the language of the Russian text.

By an odd coincidence, at exactly the same time as Speransky was working on his edition Dr Moses Gaster in London was working on an edition and translation of the Hebrew version (see note 6). Neither scholar, although they both returned to the subject in later years, seems to have been aware of the other's existence. This is strange because neither edition can be described as having been published in an obscure place; Gaster, moreover, knew Russian and included among his very many interests both Slavonic medieval studies and Sephardic Jewish studies. What a pity that these two learned gentlemen could not have tackled the problem together!

Nevertheless, Gaster's English translation of the Hebrew version does give us something with which to compare the *Taynaya taynykh*, and such a comparison does produce interesting results, particularly when used in conjunction with Manzalaoui's analysis of the structure of the various versions.

The Hebrew version of the *Secreta* is ascribed by Gaster and, apparently following him, Steele, to Judah ben Solomon Harizi,¹⁵ who is also credited with the sections on alchemy, the poison 'Bish',

¹⁴ M. N. Speransky, *Iz istorii otrechonnnykh knig. IV, Aristotelevi vrata ili Taynaya taynykh* (Pamyatniki drevney pis'mennosti i iskusstva, clxxi), St Petersburg, 1908.

¹⁵ The ascription however is not modern. Speransky (pp. 86–87) quotes Bartoloccus, *Bibliotheca magna rabbinica* (Paris, 1675, p. 482) as also naming Harizi as the translator.

the ring, sections 28 and 32, and parts of sections 20, 21, 23, 46, 58, 62 (in Gaster's numeration). The ascription is based on an alleged similarity of style and content with other works by Harizi and the fact that he was the most prominent Jewish scholar of the period in which the Hebrew translation was made. In the introduction to his edition Gaster remarks that there is hardly any difference between the Hebrew copies which he had examined. This would be unusual in any text, and in the case of the *Secreta*, which in all other versions has tempted scribes and translators into every kind of error, rationalization, and deliberate alteration to suit tastes and circumstances, it is remarkable. In fact Gaster's edition with its lack of critical apparatus must now be considered only a preliminary study and the manuscripts of the Hebrew *Secreta* should be re-examined. In fairness I must add that I am reliably informed that the Hebrew text as given by Gaster is of extreme difficulty and not in fluent Hebrew (which places the ascription to Harizi in some doubt).

II

There are some twenty copies of the Russian version¹⁶ (I have used 'Russian' as a convenient description throughout but, although it is clear that all copies can be traced to a single translation, probably into Middle Byelorussian, the language of individual copies may in fact be Great Russian, Byelorussian, or a mixture of the two with varying degrees of conformity to Church Slavonic norms). I have not yet been able to inspect all the copies but those which have been examined differ for the most part only in the following respects: language and orthography (i.e. Great Russian, Byelorussian, Church Slavonic), occasional spelling errors and rationalizations, inadvertant small omissions, presence or absence of the Russian introduction, life of Aristotle, and onomantic table.

The main text of the Russian *Taynaya taynykh* is divided into chapters (*glava*, *glavizha*) some of which are in turn divided into 'gates' (*vrata*) in the same manner as the Arabic version. Some section headings also include the name of the day of the week, a

¹⁶ Since this paper is not concerned with details of the Russian manuscripts the list which follows contains only basic information taken in some cases from catalogues and published descriptions. Dating is therefore not necessarily reliable. [GBL = State Lenin Library, Moscow; GIM = State Historical Museum, Moscow; GPB = State Public Library, Leningrad; BAN = Academy of Sciences Library, Leningrad]. (Sixteenth century) Vilnius Public Library MS 222; GBL Undol'sky MS 749; Kiev, Zlatoverkh-Mikhaylovskiy monastyr' MS 493; Oxford, Bodleian MS Laud Misc. 45; (seventeenth century) GBL Undol'sky MSS 630 and 750; GIM Sinodal'noye sobraniye MSS 359 and 723; GIM Voskresenskiy monastyr' MS 160; BAN Arkheograficheskaya kommissiya MS 229; GPB MS Q.XVIII.56; (eighteenth century) GBL Piskarev MS 191; GBL Barsov MSS 2131 and 2132; GBL Tikhonravov MS 172; GPB Titov MSS 2857 and 3611; GPB MSS Q.III.181 and Q.XV.108; GPB Mikhaylovsky MS 442.

Jewish practice (these day names were clearly a puzzle to copyists and are often incorporated into the body of the text). This numeration follows a regular sequence throughout the text including the interpolations from Razes and Maimonides, which suggests that the Hebrew original also included these interpolations.

In what follows I give a comparison of the *Taynaya taynykh* with Gaster's Hebrew version, using also the classification and sigla adopted by Manzalaoui. References to Gaster's translation of the Hebrew version are given as G. (+ section number + book number where appropriate); references to Steele's translation of the Arabic Long Form are given as St. (+ page number); references to Speransky's edition of the Russian version are given as Sp. (+ page number + Speransky's sigla where appropriate). The sections of the text are introduced by Manzalaoui's sigla and section headings in italic, followed by the Gaster and Speransky references. Abbreviations used are: *TT* = *Taynaya taynykh*; *SF* = Short Form; *LF* = Long Form.

[Introduction to *TT*]

Gaster's translation has an introductory paragraph (G. 1) addressed to 'Ye men of knowledge who understand riddles'. This is absent in *TT* but some copies, in particular those with the most complete text in other respects, contain an account of the writing of the work (absent in the earliest MS Vil. 222). I have published a translation of this passage elsewhere.¹⁷ I cannot find a source for the passage but it could have been compiled by a later copyist on the basis of information drawn from the *Aleksandriya* (the Slavonic title of the story of Alexander by Pseudo-Callisthenes, two versions of which, based on the β and ε recensions, were extremely popular in the Balkans and Russia and are known in literally hundreds of copies).¹⁸

[*Proem*, t-z; G. 2-7; Sp. 135-40, A]

(t, u. *Dedication of Caliph; Recommendation of Aristotle*. G. 2)

TT differs from G. in detail: Alexander is described in *TT* as being the son of Nectanebus, a detail not found in G. or St. but regularly found in the Slavonic *Aleksandriya* and in the *Account of the Princes of Vladimir*.¹⁹ Aristotle is described in *TT* as having been carried aloft after his death like Elijah in a chariot. For this G. has 'in a column of Divine Glory'. Confusion at this point is also found in Latin where one text has *columba ignis* for *columna ignis* (see Manzalaoui, pp. 189-90). *TT* has 'Arabs and Franks' for G. 'Arabs and barbarians' or St. 'Arabs and Persians'; this suggests to

¹⁷ W. F. Ryan, 'Aristotle in Old Russian Literature' (*Modern Language Review*, vol. 63, no. 3, London, 1968, p. 654).

¹⁸ The so-called 'Serbian' Alexander is published in *Aleksandriya. Roman ob Aleksandre Makedonskom po russkoy rukopisi XV veka*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1965. The 'Chronograph' Alexander is published in V. Istrin, 'Aleksandriya russkikh khronografov' (*Chteniya v Obshchestve istorii i drevnostey rossyiskikh*, nos. 168, 169, Moscow, 1894).

¹⁹ R. P. Dmitriyeva, *Skazaniye o knyaz'yakh vladimirskikh*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1955.

Grignaschi (p. 68) a Jewish translator of the *TT* coming originally from Constantinople or Salonika. In G. 2 'to go with him' becomes in *TT* 'to go with him to the wars' which corresponds with the Arabic version (St. 176).

(v. *Letter of Alexander to Aristotle*. G. 3)

TT similar to G.

(w. *Answer of Aristotle*. G. 3)

TT similar to G. but with an extra passage near the end: 'It is no true purchase to buy lives, that is why slaves and bondwomen flee, but a real purchase is to buy their souls, for their bodies go with them; so have near you free men bought by your kindness for ever rather than slaves bought for silver and not for ever.'

(x. *Translator's account of his search*. G. 4)

TT similar to G. For 'philosopher' and 'priest' in G. *TT* has 'farisey' (pharisee). In *TT* the work is described as being translated directly from Greek into Arabic, omitting Rumi (Syriac) mentioned in G. The intermediate stage is also omitted in the Arabic seven-book SF. It is noteworthy that the name of the translator (in G.: Yahia ben Albatrik) appears in *TT* as *Patrekiy* or *Patrikiy* (i.e. Yahia's father), indicating familiarity with the Latin and Greek forms of the name (Patricius, Πατρίκιος). If this is so, it is perhaps surprising that the name Hermes should not have been recognized. It appears here as *Romas* or *Romos*, indicating that the translator of *TT* was working from an unpointed or badly pointed text and that he understood the first syllable as the Hebrew article. In the same way Asklabios (Aesculapius) occurs later in the form *Sakulevkus*.

(y. *Aristotle's Introduction*. G. 5, 6)

TT similar to G. but the end of G. 5 reads in *TT*: 'And if anyone should learn this secret and disclose it to the unworthy, he shall be anathema in this world and the next; Lord Sabaoth, save us from this, Amen.' This formula for referring to God is also common in the Russian Alexander romance. The latter part of G. 6 on the two supports of a king is contracted, laconic and difficult to follow in *TT*.

(z. *List of discourses*, G. 7; Sp. 139-40, 6)

TT differs from G. at several points. It reads:

This book has eight chapters.

1. Of how many parts is the nature of kings.
2. In what ways he should conduct himself before the people in order that they should trust him, praising his manner of life (government?).
3. By what means to govern the nobles.
4. In what measure he should instruct (establish?) a minister for his kingdom and through him all his officers.
5. Of those who go on journeys (on his behalf) and the things necessary for them, and of his ambassadors and how they shall conduct their embassies.

6. Of the management of soldiers and generals.
7. Of the conduct of war, to know what is necessary at that time, how to range the armies (and take defensive measures and the appropriate times for this/and to observe the appropriate times for this?), and the right time to sally forth, with whom to fight or not to fight, and of the science of physiognomy, and how to conduct his life in order to preserve his health.
8. Of stones and herbs and animals which it behoves a king to have and without which he shall obtain nothing good nor maintain his health nor benefit his kingdom. And this last chapter is the completion of the instruction of the king.

This list does not in fact correspond exactly with the headings of the sections within the text which suggests that much has been interpolated.

[A. *Kinds of kings classified according to liberality*. G. 8–14, Bk. 1; Sp. 140–42, 1]

TT is very condensed by comparison with G. and not always easy to follow. It differs in some details. Its heading (not in G.) is: ‘Chapter 1 has four gates, (i) on generosity, (ii) on bravery, (iii) on mercy, (iv) on good and evil.’ The categories of generosity are curtailed and appear in a different order, and the opinion of the Indians (in G.) is omitted. The kingdom of Ninig in G. becomes ‘the great and ancient kingdom’ in *TT*.

[Ba. *Conduct*. G. 15–36, Bk. 2; Sp. 143–51, II]

G. 15. *TT* is similar.

G. 16. *TT* is slightly contracted and contains an astrological reference not in G. (lit. ‘by their unbridled behaviour they go out of their planet’).

G. 17. *TT* is similar but note the extra phrase: ‘do not give vent to your anger except with the council of your boyars’ — cf. Arabic SF MS Laud Or. 210 quoted in St. 185 ‘in the council chamber’.

G. 18. *TT* is similar to G. in the first half but in the second the words of the king’s officer to the people are given in the first person in the form of a speech and contain the extra passage:

I shall help you as much as it is in my power to do, and whatever burden you think I have placed on you, let me know and I shall be glad to lighten it, for I do not want your service with tears but with joy, for we must raise up the doers of good and kill evildoers, for thus am I called the servant of God and his sword-bearer. And whoever knows that he has transgressed before me let him repent forthwith and I shall receive him as formerly, and I shall grant the petition of the elders and bear with you good and evil in equal measure.

The final sentence of the section in G. and St. is omitted in *TT*.

G. 19, 20. *TT* is similar in tone but has the additional passage at the beginning: ‘Alexander, do not change the custom of the land, and above all your own custom, on account of other men’s words.’ Note too the extra

remarks: 'Even if your treasury is full of gold, if you have no good reputation with the people then all is for nothing', and 'then foreigners will wish you to rule over them'. After the end of section 19 in G. there is a passage in *TT* not found in G. or St.:

As the wise man said to the tsar, if our God had raised up from the earth all that we require but did not turn his heart to us, that would show us that he had raised up those things not on our account but for the beasts. Therefore expect little and it will seem much at first sight, and if at first sight you receive little it will seem much in the imagination (?).

Cf. St. 186: 'Therefore he who abstains from little gains much'. Section G. 20 differs from *TT* in minor detail.

G. 21. *TT* is similar to G. except for the remark 'seat everyone according to merit, be pleasant to them and praise them to their face and also in private according to their deserts'. This corresponds with a variant in G. Also *TT* gives the advice of mixing with courtiers three or four times a year against twice in G. and two or three times in St.

G. 22. *TT* similar to G. except that *TT* has 'Arabs' for 'Indians'. Note 'Sakulevkus' for 'Asklabios' (see discussion of G. 4 above).

G. 23. *TT* similar to G. but 'in the book of the Indians', given as a variant in G., becomes 'as the Arabic philosophers say'. In *TT* the opinion expressed by these philosophers is 'It is better to clothe the souls of your servants in awe than their bodies in iron (?fettters)' — reasonable advice and closer to that in St. ('let thy fear in their souls be worse than thy sword in their hearts') than in G. ('... than to place thy army in the valleys'). *TT* also mentions the destruction of ships among the consequences of storms. This is absent in G. but ships are mentioned in the analogy of the wind which follows in the Arabic (St. 188). Between G. 23 and G. 24 there is a brief section in *TT* on the fourfold nature of good and evil:

Evil and good are of four kinds, (i) absolute good, (ii) absolute evil, (iii) little evil and much good, (iv) little good and much evil. The first is God only, the second has not been created, the third is good and the fourth bad. Therefore conduct your affairs so that there should be little evil and much good.

This corresponds to nothing in G. or St.

G. 24. *TT* similar to G.

G. 25. *TT* differs from G. and St. and reads:

Alexander, increase your stores of corn according to the number of your people in each town, and (have) stone buildings and iron weapons to aid them, and if it will not be a temptation, divide up the towers and the city among the boyars of your people. And always equip your cities as if there will be a siege or a famine. Thus shall you benefit your kingdom.

G. 26–28. *TT* is similar to G.

G. 28 is followed by a considerable passage not found in G. or St. It reads:

Alexander, examine your boyars (what each has), and how they serve you; find out their loyalty to you and what each will suffer on your account. If you place much on little it will harm your kingdom and for this reason have the riches of the state multiplied that they know how to place burdens on the provinces(?). Alexander, you will do no good to yourself or your country unless you have an image of it with all its rivers and fields and marshes, knowing the length and breadth of it, and also each governor, when you give him a province, give him also a copy of it and of the census of the people in it [and say?] you shall hand it back entire as you received it, and if anyone should harm anything he must make it good himself, and all the judges shall give a written account and place it before you, and if it is true, renew his post for another year, but if he has harmed you then recover your losses. Thus shall you be loved by all who love truth and you will fill your land with people and goods. It is worth noting that there were no maps in Muscovy at this time but in 1490 a survey of the Muscovite lands was begun. The first maps probably date from the early sixteenth century.²⁰

G. 29. *TT* similar to G.

G. 30. *TT* has additionally ‘Do not stretch out your right hand (to conclude) a treaty(?) until you have found out enough of how the matter will end’.

G. 31. *TT* is similar to G.

G. 32. *TT* is similar to G. but the ‘kingdoms of Atag’ etc. become ‘Ninevgii’ (Ninevah) in *TT* (MS Laud Misc. 45 — Sp. is corrupt here). This may be a scribal rationalization or a reference to Ninig in section G. 11.

G. 33. *TT* differs slightly from G. and reads: ‘Alexander do not fear things which are past or bloody, for this is the way of women and frivolous men.’ St. has ‘women and weak persons’.

G. 34. *TT* similar to G.

G. 35. *TT* differs slightly from G. and begins: ‘Alexander, do not trust women in (by) your bed except one who has been tried and is devoted to your well-being. For you are God’s gift to the people, the pastor of their bodies and protector of their goods.’ The ‘poison maiden’ in this section is credited in *TT* with the nature of a scorpion (‘snake’ in G., ‘serpent’ in St.).

[Bb. *Defence of astrology*. G. 36; Sp. 151–52]

TT is closer to St. than to G. in its condemnation of blind religiosity. The section on Plato and the colours is shorter than in G. and even more obscure. In the section of astrology the reference in *TT* to its divine origin

²⁰ See B. A. Rybakov, *Russkiye karty Moskovii XI — nachala XVI veka*, Moscow, 1975, pp. 8, 9.

is not found in G. but is in the Arabic SF MS Laud Or. 210, as also is the recommendation of fasting.

G. 37. *TT* similar to G.

[C. *Justice*. G. 38, 39; Sp. 152-54, III]

TT is similar to G. but in the section called by Steele 'The Circle of the Sphere' *TT* has: 'And therefore I wish to draw for you *two* circles [my italics. WFR], one worldly and one spiritual.' *TT* does not in fact contain any diagrams at all and the text is much abbreviated. Note the additional phrase 'without this not even his planet shall help him', which corresponds to nothing in G. or St.

[D abc. *Ministers*. G. 40-49; Sp. 154-61, IV]

The title in *TT* differs from G. and St. It reads 'Of the chief minister, the secretary, the seal-bearer, the town governors, tribute collectors, knights, civil officers and seal-bearers'. G. 41 is abbreviated and not always clear in *TT* and is curious for its philosophical terminology.

G. 42. *TT* similar to G.

G. 43. *TT* similar to G. but with the addition of an aphorism on secrets and a passage on seeking out the secrets of your enemy by bribing his advisers and employing foreign merchants as spies.

G. 44. *TT* is similar to G. 'BHTS the Greek' becomes in *TT* 'Batisto the Hellene' and his advice follows the metaphor given in the Arabic SF (MS Laud Or. 210) rather than G.

G. 45. *TT* similar to G.

G. 46. The list of qualities of a minister (fourteen in *TT*) differs from G. but is very similar to the Arabic SF (MS Laud Or. 210). In *TT* the fifth quality describes the 'science of numbers, sharpening and sweetening the reason like salt and pepper and other things which improve food'. The sixth quality mentions fair prices, weights and measures (cf. Arabic SF 'faithful in transactions'). The twelfth quality mentions knowledge of foreign customs and that the minister should be of a noble family or one who has fallen on hard times or been in foreign lands. The fourteenth quality adds to the prohibition of wine 'except with medicinal ingredients by reason of illness'.

G. 47. *TT* differs from other versions. A difficult introduction may probably be translated:

We ourselves are the product (?) of heavenly sparks [here as elsewhere in *TT* the word *iskra* 'spark' probably means the influence of a planet] and from these are determined the manner and nature of our physical composition, for they are the mover and we the moved. Man is the first of all living things in honour but the last in creation; in an hour he was created and in an hour he will perish. Therefore there is no quality in all the living creatures which is not in man.

The list of human qualities which follows reads in *TT*:

Brave as the lion; Fearful as the hare; Generous as the chicken; Mean as the dog; Irascible as the raven; Swift as the panther; Sociable(?) as the dove; Aggressive as the vixen; Simple as the sheep; Swift as the deer; Slow as the bear; Splendid as the elephant; Humble as the ass; Rapacious as the vulture(?); Proud as the peahen(!); Wandering as the ostrich; Stubborn as the tomtit; Patient as the pig; Obtuse as the cuckoo; Bold as the horse; Shy(?) as the mouse; Alert as the bee; Sorrowful as the spider; Meek as the ant; Vengeful and hostile as the camel; Amenable as the mule(!?); Dumb as the fish; Twittering as the nightingale’ (cf. Manzalaoui, pp. 176–78).

G. 48. *TT* differs from G. The warning against red-haired people becomes a warning against pale people (apparently taken from the later section on physiognomy). The warning against employing kinsmen is extended to ‘coevals from your homeland’.

G. 49. *TT* is similar to G.

[E. *Secretaries*. G. 50–52; Sp. 161–64]

This section in G. is headed ‘Book 5. Of the Royal Scribes and Seal-bearer’. In *TT* it is in the Arabic SF (MS Laud Or. 210). The description of the scribe is similar to that in G. Despite the heading in G. there is in fact no description of the sealbearer; in *TT* the sealbearer is described and a list is given of his six qualities. It appears to be derived from the list of the qualities of the minister (see above).

This section is followed in *TT* by passages on town governors, generals and civil officers. The qualities of the town governor are to be the same as those of the sealbearer; he must also know the number of his citizens, understand fortification, have travelled; if a foreigner he is to hate your enemies; he is to judge fairly ‘from books’, to hold no grudges and not to appropriate the property of others. The general is to be brave, handsome, smart in dress, popular with his men, able to settle disputes and brawls without recourse to the king, godfearing and fit to be sent on embassies. The civil officer is to ensure the payment of poll-tax (less for women and children and those unable to bear arms) so that the king will always know how many common people, soldiers, etc. he has in his lands. The tax-collectors are to be changed each year. The king should also have his own special craftsmen able to repair every kind of weapon. None of this is to be found in G. or St.

G. 51, 52. *TT* is similar to G.

[F. *Ambassadors*. G. 53–56, Bk. 7; Sp. 165–66, v]

G. 53. *TT* is similar to G. except that the heading differs slightly and the passage begins in *TT*: ‘Alexander, it behoves you to have a mirror of roads and image of the whole world and the custom of lands’ (cf. note to G. 26–28 above). The origin of this idea is not known to me. The French

and Spanish Alexander romances have references to a map of the world on the wall of Alexander's tent, and Thomas Elyot in the sixteenth century states that Alexander ordered maps to be made of the lands through which he passed.²¹

G. 54. *TT* is similar to G.

G. 55. *TT* differs from G. and is longer. The Persians in *TT* are alleged to tempt ambassadors with women as well as wine. All messages, incoming and outgoing are to be recorded in writing. Foreign ambassadors should not be allowed to remain long and should be distracted with entertainments.

G. 56. *TT* is abbreviated to one sentence.

[H. *Generals*. G. 57–61, Bk. 8; Sp. 166–70, vi]

G. 57 is preceded by a long section in *TT* headed 'Of the management of your servants and boyars and knights' (Sp. 166–68). The section appears to have been constructed from advice given in other sections. In summary its message is: Test your servants' loyalty; do not take foreigners into your service unless they are well known to you; do not employ men who praise foreign ways; regulate your servants' eating and drinking; promote for merit and not for reasons of birth; do not pay too well but take care of your servants' welfare, especially medically; do not have soldiers armed at all times, rather keep weapons stored and inspect them regularly. The subsection on boyars says that they are the strength of the kingdom and their children most suited to the royal service. The council is to be drawn from their ranks. Towns are to be given to the longest serving and boyars are to be left with their ancestral and service estates. They are never to be put to shame, but promotion must be for merit only; 'As Romas (Hermes) has said, be the son of whomsoever you please provided that you are wise, for there is no profit in rank without wisdom and merit.' None of this, including the quotation from Hermes, is to be found in G. or St.

G. 57–61. *TT* (section headed 'On Knights', Sp. 168–70) materially as G.

[Ia. *Wars*. G. 62–67, Bk. 9; Sp. 170–74, vii]

The heading in *TT* is 'Chapter seven. Of military affairs, the image of the army, of guards, how to dispose the army of whom to fight or not to fight, of physiognomy, and how the king is to preserve his health in his drinking, eating, sleeping and dress'. The first sentence in G. is replaced in *TT* by a longer section advising the establishment of a bodyguard of the finest and best-equipped men in the army and who have been abroad. Men are to be sent abroad for this purpose and to gather military intelligence. Alexander should be incognito in the army, wear secret armour and sleep in it. Thereafter *TT* follows G. in outline but differs considerably in detail. The weapons 'Hisaros' and 'Akud' in G. become 'weapons

²¹ Thomas Elyot, *The Boke named the Governour*, ed. H. H. S. Croft, London, 1883, vol. 1, pp. 77–78.

which strike from afar’ in *TT*, which also offers the advice that horses should be accustomed to the sound of cannon and wild beasts; the king is to stand calmly in a prominent place during the battle and publicly proclaim the justice of his cause, lamenting the perfidy of his enemy; he is to encourage his men by promising to make peasants into boyars but to record instances of cowardice in the annals of the land; soldiers are to have muskets fixed to their spears to terrify horses.

[Ic. *Onomancy*. G. 69–70, Bk. 6; Sp. 174]

G. 69. *TT* substantially as G.

G. 70. The onomantic table. In substance *TT* follows G. except that the tables are actually given in tabular form. The tables are described as ‘gates’ and it is probably this that the Church Council of 1551 (the so-called *Stoglav*) had in mind when it mentioned the ‘Gates of Aristotle’ for the *TT* itself was not known by this title until Speransky’s edition of the text. Moreover, the *TT* is mentioned in the context of divinatory works and the onomancy is the only part of the work which can be consulted for divinatory purposes. It is noteworthy that two of the copies of *TT* (MSS Sin. 723 and Barsov 2131) have examples of the efficacy of the table which include Alexander and Porus, clearly taken from Pseudo-Callisthenes. I have discussed the onomantic table in the Russian text in greater detail elsewhere.²²

[Bd *Physiognomy*. G. 80, Bk. xi; Sp. 175–79]

(α *Proem*. G. 80)

TT has the heading ‘First gate. On Physiognomy. Sunday’. The text which follows is rather obscure but definitely different from G.

G. 81–86. *TT* differs from G. in detail. ‘Poisonous snakes’ becomes ‘the Indian scorpion which kills with its gaze’. The ‘people of Ashkenaz’ becomes ‘*lyudi nemetski*’, i.e. probably Germans but possibly just foreigners.

G. 81–105. *TT* differs only in detail from G. except that G. 87–88, 92–93, 96–97, 100–5 are treated as single sections.

This is followed in *TT* (Sp. 179–229) by a series of interpolations on health, medicine and physiognomy. Identified sources are Maimonides (‘Moses the Egyptian’), *De Venenis* and *De Coitu* and Razes, *Ad Regem Mansorem*.

[Bc. *Health*. G. 107–23, Bks. 11, 12; Sp. 229–35, vii]

G. 107. This is headed in *TT*: ‘Fourth Gate. Chapter seven is divided into four’. It includes the advice that the king should not disclose all his maladies to his physician, also found in the O and M variants of G. This chapter is often found separated from its context in Russian *lechebniki*

²² W. F. Ryan, ‘The Onomantic Table in the Old Russian *Secreta secretorum*’ (*Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. XLIX, no. 117, London, October 1971, pp. 603–6).

(medical compendia), usually with the title 'Letter of Moses the Egyptian to Alexander', a transference of ascription which demonstrates its origin in the *TT*.²³

G. 108-10. *TT* is similar to G.

G. 111. *TT* is similar to G. and includes the variant from O and M in G.

G. 112-15. *TT* similar to G.

G. 116-19. *TT* similar to G. except that the autumn and winter diets are confused and have details interchanged.

G. 120-23. *TT* is similar to G. but begins 'Alexander, take care of this most honorable temple (i.e. the body) for in it dwells the emissary of the Lord Sabaoth (cf. *Proem*) and keep it in moderation, not murmuring against God'. *TT* includes the passages marked O and M in G.

This is followed in *TT* by a section containing Aristotle's reply to Alexander on how to cure his horse Dutsefal (Bucephalus) and on the value of the horse to man. I do not know the origin of this passage which is not in G. or St. The forms 'Dutsefal' or 'Duchipal' or variants of them also occurs in the *Aleksandriya*²⁴ and in a late Byelorussian translation of the *De Preliis*.²⁵ With regard to this form of the name Professor Magoun's question 'Whence Dúlcifal?'²⁶ is answerable in part. The change of *k* to *ch/ts* presents no difficulty phonologically and the initial *d* is best explained by the fact that in later Cyrillic semi-uncial and in cursive some forms of the letters в and д are so similar that confusion in an unfamiliar name is not at all surprising.

[J. *Occult and Pseudo-scientific*. G. 124-35, Bk. 13; Sp. 236-38, VIII]

In general *TT* has a garbled and confused equivalent of G. The chapter is notable for a number of Arabic and Hebrew words. G. 125 is split in two and the second half placed after G. 127. Sections G. 133 and 134 come in reverse order. The text of *TT* is arranged as follows: G. 125 (as far as 'silver and quicksilver'); 126; 127 (as far as 'lucky star'); (section on 'the seal', not in G.); 125 (to end); 128; 129-32; 134; 133; (135 omitted).

G. 124. *TT* similar to G. but with passage on elements and species omitted.

G. 125. Abbreviated and split in two (see above).

G. 126. *TT* similar to G. but has 'and evil men far from it' for G.: 'and the net far away from it'.

G. 127. For the poison Bish (aconite?) *TT* has 'Bashmin se est Arasim velikikh'. The text in Sp. is obscure and incomplete but MS Laud Misc 45

²³ Some of these are given in V. M. Florinsky, *Russkiye prostonarodnyye travniki i lechebniki*, Kazan', 1879, pp. 184-87.

²⁴ *Aleksandriya* (see note 18), p. 53.

²⁵ *Aleksandriya*, Minsk, 1962, pp. 31, 331.

²⁶ F. P. Magoun, 'Whence "Dúlcifal" in Gǫngu-Hrólfs Saga?' in *Studia Germanica. Tillägnade Ernst Albin Kock den 6 December 1934*, Lund, 1934, pp. 177-91.

appears to have 'the mosquito of Ethiopia' for G. 'asp'. The section is followed by a sentence on 'making a seal of every land' not in G.

G. 128, 129. *TT* similar to G.

G. 130. *TT* omits the explanation of the Persian origin of the Bezoar, also the reference to epilepsy. It has 'the lower land' for G. 'the land of Tsin' and 'like a serpent' for G. 'like a piece of sallow leather'.

G. 131. *TT* similar to G. but omits the reference to Arabic.

G. 132. *TT* is similar to G. but adds snakebite as one of the ills cured by the Emerald.

G. 134, 135. In reverse order in *TT*.

G. 135. Omitted in *TT*.

[Summary in *TT*]

The text of the *Secreta* ends at G. 135 but *TT* has an extra chapter entitled 'Chapter the last, which is the fulfilment of the conduct of the king'. This is a summary of the political and ethical teaching of the work. It contains a list of the four categories of rule, the four kinds of servant, the four levels of esteem to be accorded to servitors; the advisability of providing special accommodation for wise men and visiting them there frequently; the advisability of promoting the sciences; 'the barrier to wisdom is silence', followed by the four categories of words.

[Life of Aristotle]

Some copies of the *TT* (not the earliest) have a 'life of Aristotle' appended. This was published by Speransky but without comment. I have established elsewhere that this is a shortened version of the account in Diogenes Laertius.²⁷ Some linguistic evidence points to a Latin source. The passage is notable for the assertion that Alexander murdered Aristotle, evidently a confusion of the Callisthenes episode.

III

One may make a number of observations on this comparison of texts. Disregarding interpolations and repetitions we discover that the structure of the Russian version, using Manzalaoui's sigla, is ¹A ²Bab ³C ⁴Dabc EG ⁵F ⁶H ⁷Iac Bdc ⁸Jaf. This gives us an eight-book form but one that differs from Manzalaoui's structure in that Bdc has been taken from the end of the eighth book and placed in the seventh. At the same time the order of the material is much as in Gaster although the grouping into books is different. Linguistic evidence clearly points to a Hebrew original, but even allowing for

²⁷ W. F. Ryan, 'Drevnerusskiy perevod zhizneopisaniya Aristotelya Diogena Laertsogo' (*Slavia*, vol. 38, no. 2, Prague, 1968, pp. 349-55) and 'Aristotle in Old Russian Literature' (see note 17).

bad, very free or very literal translation, omission of words not understood, interpolations and scribal rationalizations, one rarely has the impression that the original is quite the same as the text published by Gaster. Where Gaster gives extra passages from other manuscripts (his O(Oxford) and M(Munich)) the *Taynaya taynykh* usually follows those variants. At many points where the text of the *Taynaya taynykh* differs from Gaster's it does correspond with the Arabic seven-book Short Form found in Bodleian MS Laud Or. 210, the first in Manzalaoui's list (Aa) and apparently the earliest extant copy of the text. If we exclude the remote possibility that the translator of the Russian version was working simultaneously from Hebrew and Arabic originals, it seems reasonable to conclude that the Russian version is derived from an unrecorded Hebrew version differing in detail but not in essential structure from the text published by Gaster, containing those sections ascribed by him to Harizi together with further, often extensive, interpolations and close in some details to the Arabic seven-book Short Form. The process of conflation which produced this version, whether it still exists and whether or not one can go further and postulate, as does Grignaschi, the existence of an unrecorded Arabic version also, are matters which must be left to specialist orientalists.

The other interpolations in the Russian version seem to fall into two categories: large sections of medical works, mainly by Razes and Maimonides (these have not been examined here); smaller interpolations, some of which may show familiarity with versions of Pseudo-Callisthenes, and others which indicate a scholastic education and an interest in political, ethical and astrological matters. In particular, these interpolations have a bearing on the relationship between the ruler and the ruled, the role of nobles, justice, promotion for merit, the organization of the state. Also noticeable among the smaller divergencies from Gaster's text are references to the role of foreigners and the importance of travel, two apparent references to maps, and an emphasis on firearms in the section on warfare.

The extreme topicality of these minor interpolations for the political and cultural scene in Muscovy and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries tempt one to suggest that they are the work of the translator. Even if this is not so, there is much in the original text to suggest that the *Secreta* was translated with political aims in mind. The importance of the integrity and defence of the realm, the importance of the ruler keeping himself informed on all aspects of life in his realm, impartial justice for all under the tsar, the role of the nobility, promotion for good service and loyalty alone, and above all, the practical justification of absolutism, all this must have been of the greatest interest to

the Grand Prince of Moscow, the boyars and the service class. It should also be remembered that the protagonists of Muscovite hegemony and in particular Ivan IV were at great pains to establish historical precedent and justification for their measures and claims to imperial dignity, and a considerable body of literature was produced to this end.

In particular one's attention is drawn to the fact that many of the political recommendations of the work are repeated in the works of Ivan Peresvetov: the ‘Tale of the Sultan Mohammed’ (*Skazaniye o Magmete Saltane*) and the ‘Grand Petition’ (*Bol'shaya chelobitnaya*).²⁸ Here we find recommendations, evidently addressed to Ivan the Terrible, on the administration of justice (the use of law-books as in the *Taynaya taynykh*: выдал им книги судебные по чему им правити и винити);²⁹ on tax-gathering, on the advantages of voluntary service (а не велел их прикабаливати ни прихолопити а служити им доброволно);³⁰ on promotion for loyal service alone (кто у меня верно служит и стоит люто против недруга, и тот у меня лучшей будет);³¹ on the welfare of soldiers³² and the decimal organization of the army,³³ on the need for fair weights and measures,³⁴ and above all, on the need to rule by inspiring awe (*groza*) and upholding law (*pravda*). It seems unlikely that Peresvetov, the author of the first Russian work to resemble a *Fürstenspiegel*, should have hit upon the rather surprising fiction of ascribing his advice to Greek ‘books of wisdom’ found and acted upon by Mahomet II, without some kind of literary model. In fact the *Taynaya taynykh* is exactly this. It *does* purport to be an esoteric Greek work on statecraft and to have been discovered in the era of Islam and translated for the benefit of the Khalif. Moreover it *does* contain precisely the advice which Peresvetov says Mahomet found there and made use of to rule his empire, advice ignored by the Greeks who were therefore themselves responsible for the fall of Byzantium. It seems highly probable, therefore, that Peresvetov is talking about and summarizing information from the *Taynaya taynykh* in his own work and that the *Taynaya taynykh* was sufficiently well known that he could assume that his readers would recognize the allusion.³⁵ The *Taynaya taynykh* is all the more important

²⁸ A. A. Zimin, ed., *Sochineniya I. Peresvetova*, Moscow–Leningrad, 1956.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 156.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

³⁵ Professor Zimin in his massively documented study of Peresvetov, *I. S. Peresvetov i yego sovremenniki*, Moscow, 1958, does in fact draw attention in passing to the similarities between the *Taynaya taynykh* and Peresvetov's work (pp. 352, 353, and *passim* pp. 355, 397, 399) and suggests that Peresvetov had read the *Taynaya taynykh*. Unfortunately, he does not develop the idea.

in this context in that many of the political and military recommendations which it has in common with Peresvetov's work were acted on in the reign of Ivan IV. There is in fact other evidence that the work was known among the important political figures of the period. Speransky suggests that Maxim Grek³⁶ knew it and Sobolevsky thought he could detect its influence in the writings of Prince Kurbsky.³⁷ For the seventeenth century Speransky has pointed out that there were copies in the libraries of Tsar Mikhail Fedorovich and Patriarch Nikon.³⁸ Certainly the implied parallel of Alexander and the Grand Prince of Moscow was by no means out of place in a state in which the Pseudo-Callisthenes Alexander romance was probably the most popular non-religious work, a state which was claiming to be the 'Third Rome', which had adopted the double eagle as its seal, claimed that its regalia came from Babylon and Byzantium and traced the genealogy of its princes to Imperial Rome. Indeed, Peresvetov says 'Будет о тебе, о государе, слава велиа вовеки, яко о цесари Августе и о цари Александре Макидонском.'³⁹

For all this, although the importance of the *Taynaya taynykh* in the history of Russian medicine is accepted in the literature of the history of science in Russia, its importance as a source of political, ethical, and military ideas in the period of the emergence of the Muscovite autocracy has been almost ignored by political historians of Muscovy. It is to be hoped that specialists in the field will not allow this neglect to continue.

³⁶ Speransky, op. cit., p. 4.

³⁷ Sobolevsky, op. cit., p. 419.

³⁸ Speransky, op. cit., p. 5.

³⁹ Zimin, op. cit., p. 171.